...IT'S ABOUT TO BEGIN AGAIN.
"As flies to wanton boys,
are we to the gods,
They kill us for their sport."
–William Shakespeare
THE GREAT BEYOND
DWAYNE MCDUFFIE WRITER
SCOTT KOLINS ARTIST
PAUL MOUNTS COLORIST
ARTMONKEYS' DAVE LANPHEAR LETTERER
LAZER, SCHMIDT & SITTERSON ASSISTANT EDITORS
TOM BREVOORT EDITOR
JOE QUESADA EDITOR IN CHIEF
DAN BUCKLEY PUBLISHER

LIFE IS GOOD.
FIRST OFF, I NARROWLY MANAGED TO AVOID FLUNKING OUT OF COLLEGE LAST SEMESTER. GO FIGURE.
BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY, I'VE ALSO PATCHED UP THE PROBLEMS BETWEEN ME AND LAUREN, MY VERY BEST FRIEND.
WHAT?
I WAS LOOKING AT THAT CUTE LITTLE WRINKLE YOU GET ON YOUR CHEEK WHEN YOU'RE CONCENTRATING.
OKAY. MAYBE A LITTLE MORE THAN "PATCHED UP".
I WAS THINKING OF KISSING IT TO MAKE IT BETTER.
MAYBE YOU SHOULD. I'M TOO YOUNG FOR A FACE-LIFT.
AND THESE DAYS, DEFINITELY MORE THAN JUST "FRIEND."

I ALWAYS HEAR PEOPLE COMPLAINING ABOUT SUMMER IN NEW YORK. I THINK THEY'RE NUTS.
MY ROOMMATE'S GONE BACK TO JERSEY FOR THE WEEKEND.
SOUNDS LIKE A PROJECT. COME ON, MY DORM'S CLOSER THAN YOURS.
WHOA!
YOU TOTALLY MISSED MY CHEEK THERE, HERO.
I COULD TRY AGAIN...
TOO HOT? TOO CROWDED? TOO WHINY. THIS IS THE BEST PLACE IN THE WHOLE WIDE WORLD.
THAT'S LUCKY. CAUSE MY ROOMMATE IS CURLED UP WITH PEOPLE MAGAZINE'S ANNUAL "40 HOTTEST SUPER HEROES" ISSUE.
ANYWAY, DEFINITELY BETTER THAN WISCONSIN. EVEN DISCOUNTING MY ENTIRELY EXCELLENT GIRLFRIEND.

SKREEE
CHOOM
WHAT WAS THAT?
MY TONGUE, WHAT'D YOU THINK IT WAS?
I'M SERIOUS! SOMETHING'S HAPPENING OUTSIDE.
SMEK
I SEE IT. SUPER-VILLAIN RAMPAGE 101.
THIS IS THE PART WHERE I USED TO MAKE UP SOME STUPID LIE, EXPLAINING WHY I HAVE TO LEAVE.
BUT THAT WAS BEFORE I HAD MY EPIPHANY: TRUST THE WOMAN I LOVE WITH MY SECRET.
MANY ADVANTAGES TO THIS ARRANGEMENT: NO LIES BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR LOVED ONE.
WAIT, GREGG. YOUR GOGGLES ARE CROOKED.
SOMEONE TO MAKE SURE YOU HAVEN'T ACCIDENTALLY PUT YOUR SHORTS ON OVER YOUR TIGHTS.
YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE HOW OFTEN THAT HAPPENS, EVEN TO VETERANS.
BACK IN 15-- 30 IF HE BROUGHT FRIENDS.

BUT THE BIGGEST ADVANTAGE? NOTHING BEATS POST-SAVING-THE-WORLD SEX.
YOU'LL PROBABLY HAVE TO TRUST ME ON THAT.
OH! YOU WAS GONNA ARREST ME? WHO'S THE PUNK NOW, HUH?
WHO'S THE PUNK NOW?!
FOOOOSH
RHETORICAL QUESTION, OR DO YOU STILL OWE ME A GOOD ENTRANCE LINE FROM THE LAST TIME I BUSTED YOU?
GRAVITY!

BZZZT! WRONG ANSWER. I'M GRAVITY, YOU'RE THE PUNK, AND THIS--?
--THIS IS YOUR RIDE!
KRASH!!!
HE'S ALL YOURS, OFFICERS. BRUSHFIRE'S ALMOST INVULNERABLE, BUT THAT OUGHT TO SLOW EVEN HIM D--
SSSSSSSSS
SSSSSSSSSS
I AM SO MAD AT YOU RIGHT NOW...
DUDE, I JUST HIT YOU WITH A CAR. THERE'S A TRUCK, RIGHT OVER THERE.

YOU DON'T LOOK SO GOOD. MAYBE YOU SHOULD HIT THE INFIRMARY WHEN YOU GET BACK TO JAIL..
YEAH, I WAS THINKING THE SAME THING...
THANKS FOR THE SAVE. WHEN WE SAW YOU, WE WERE SURE YOU WERE HEADED STRAIGHT FOR THAT BIG THING IN THE PARK.
WHAT BIG THING IN THE PARK??
NYPD
OH, THAT BIG THING IN THE PARK.
WEIRD. IT'S LIKE SOMETHING'S DRAWING ME TOWARD IT.
GOTTA BE A WAY TO STOP MYSELF BEFORE I CRASH INTO THAT FORCE FIELD..
OKAY, SOMEBODY OBVIOUSLY WANTS ME IN HERE.

HE LOOKS OKAY TO ME. STOP BABYING HIM.
HOLY CRAP. IS THAT YOUR *TONGUE*?
YEAH, SMART GUY. THESE ARE MY *TEETH*, TOO.

WHAT HAPPENED TO ME?
YOU WERE JUST TRANSPORTED INTO DEEP SPACE VIA A MATTER-STREAMING CONDUIT.
DON'T LET HIM FOOL YOU, ALL OF US WERE DISORIENTED BY THE TRANSPORT BEAM. VENOM PUKED.
MEET THE REST OF THE VICTIMS, EVERYBODY? THE NEWBIE'S NAME IS GRAVITY. GRAVITY? THIS IS--
I'M SORRY, DID YOU SAY "DEEP SPACE?"
WHERE ARE WE?
DEEP SPACE. GET A CLUE.
HEY, SORRY I'M NOT QUICK ENOUGH ADJUSTING TO THE FACT THAT I'M ON THE STARSHIP ENTERPRISE.
I'M WITH YOU, MAN. I'VE NEVER EVEN BEEN OUT OF NEW YORK. DON'T EVEN HAVE A PASSPORT.
DO NOT LIGHT THOSE! WE DON'T KNOW WHAT'S MAINTAINING OUR ATMOSPHERE.
EVENTUALLY, I LEARNED ALL THEIR NAMES.
THE WASP.
=WHFF!=
KRAVEN THE HUNTER.
ANYWAY, IT'S A BAD HABIT.
GREAT, "CIGARETTE NAZIS IN SPACE." MAYBE YOU SHOULD MAKE A MOVIE.
YOU WANT A PIECE OF ME, SMOKEY MCCHIMNEY?
NAH. IT'S YOUR WORLD, HOLLYWOOD.
THE HOOD.
DON'T MIND HIM, HE THINKS HE'S SUPPOSED TO TALK LIKE HE'S ON A SITCOM.

ENOUGH!
WE NEED TO CONCENTRATE ON FIGURING OUT WHO'S DONE THIS TO US, AND WHY.
MEDUSA.
DOCTOR PYM.
MY WIFE... AH, EX-WIFE... HAS SOME INSIGHT INTO ALL THAT. JANET?
SOMETHING SIMILAR HAPPENED TO ME SEVERAL YEARS AGO. SPIDER-MAN WAS THERE, TOO.
YOU TELL IT, I HAVE TO KEEP AN EYE ON CAPTAIN OVERBITE HERE.
SPIDER-MAN I KNEW ALREADY. HECK, I WAS PRACTICALLY A MEMBER OF HIS FAN CLUB.
VENOM I'D SEEN ON CNN. THERE WAS A LOT OF BAD BLOOD BETWEEN THOSE TWO.
SO WE'RE ALL DOING THE INSULTING NICKNAME THING NOW?
MISTER, I PRACTICALLY INVENTED THE INSULTING NICKNAME THING.
BUT I DON'T THINK ANYONE UNDERSTOOD HOW MUCH.
EXCUSE ME, THE WASP WAS TALKING.
FIREBIRD.
LAST TIME, A SUPER-POWERFUL ALIEN ENTITY KNOWN AS THE BEYONDER KIDNAPPED ALMOST THREE DOZEN OF US.
HE DIVIDED US INTO "GOOD" AND "EVIL" TEAMS, THEN FORCED US TO FIGHT, "TO SEE WHICH IS STRONGER." BUT THIS TIME I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT--
MAYBE WE SHOULD JUST ASK HIM.

NO. AND WE'RE OBVIOUSLY NOT GOING TO DO WHAT IT ASKED US.
WHY'S IT OBVIOUS? I DON'T SEE ANYBODY ELSE OFFERING US A WAY HOME.
AND I GOTTA TELL YOU, I CAN THINK OF A LOT OF WISHES I'D LIKE TO COME TRUE.
=HHHHHHHE
HE'S GONE INVISIBLE--?!
I SHOULD BE ABLE TO FIND HIM WITH MY SPIDER-SENSE...
DON'T BOTHER. EVEN WITHOUT MY ANIMAL SENSES--
--HE REEKS.
=WHOOFF
HOW STUPID CAN YOU BE?
I DUNNO. WHAT'S THE RECORD?

OPEN YOUR EYES, THERE'S NOBODY IN THIS ROOM YOU'RE CAPABLE OF KILLING, EVEN WITH THESE TOYS, EXCEPT MAYBE THE FAT SCIENTIST.
EXCUSE ME?
I'M SORRY. YOU'RE RIGHT. I JUST LOST MY %#@! FOR A SECOND.
I AM NOT FAT.
WHATEVER.
I'M WONDERING IF I STILL COULDN'T CUT SOME KIND OF DEAL.
YOU WANT TO CUT A DEAL WITH THE BEYONDER?
WHY NOT?
BECAUSE HE'S POWER. YOU DON'T NEGOTIATE WITH POWER. YOU JUST TAKE THE DEAL OR LEAVE IT.
YOU'RE SERIOUSLY SUGGESTING WE ALL FIGHT UNTIL THERE'S ONLY ONE SURVIVOR?
NO. ANYWAY, THAT'S NOT WHAT I HEARD HIM SAY.
NEAR AS I CAN FIGURE, OUT OF THIS WHOLE GROUP, I ONLY GOT ONE ENEMY.

AND THAT'S YOU!
LIKE I DIDN'T SEE THAT COMING.
I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYBODY MOVE LIKE SPIDER-MAN.
TAKE HIM DOWN!
BUT VENOM COMES CLOSE.
THANKS FOR THE OFFER, BUT THE DAY I CAN'T TAKE THIS BOZO DOWN BY MY LONESOME...
THWIP
HUNGH!
...WELL, TO BE HONEST; THAT DAY I'LL PROBABLY ASK FOR HELP. I'M NOT PROUD.
HOLD STILL!
WHAT KIND OF SENSE DOES THAT MAKE? TRY AND THINK YOUR TAUNTS THROUGH FIRST.
LOOK, GARGAN, YOU COULDN'T BEAT ME WHEN YOU WERE THE SCORPION, AND YOU CAN'T BEAT ME NOW.
WHY DON'T YOU JUST GIVE UP? WE'VE DONE THIS DANCE A DOZEN TIMES AND WE BOTH KNOW HOW IT ALWAYS--

--END6
SHUNK
NO!

OR EVEN IF IT IS, THE STAKES ARE LIFE AND DEATH.
HE'S GONE.
YOU HEAR THAT, BEYONDER? I SLEW MY ENEMY! I WANT MY REWARD!
GIVE ME WHAT I DESERVE!
DON'T YOU WORRY ABOUT THAT, VENOM.
I PROMISE YOU'LL GET EXACTLY WHAT YOU DESERVE.
TO BE CONTINUED...

MARVEL HEROES HOTSPOT

"Admit nothing, deny everything, make counteraccusations."

TOM MOLLY SEZ

My roommate, who is a teacher, told me that one of her students had asked her if Captain America was real. The girl's brother had told her that he was pretend, but she badly wanted him to exist. When I heard this story, the thing I was most surprised about was that a ten year old girl knew about a comic book character who hasn't appeared on the big screen. But the times, they are a' changing.

At Wizard World Philadelphia this past weekend, another friend of mine remarked that she's been seeing more women at the convention each year. It's no longer a surprising thing to see fangirls pawing through the stacks of half-priced trade paperbacks with the fanboys. I've been a comics fan since I was five years old. Growing up, I didn't meet any girls who shared my interest. But now the female comics fans seem to be coming out of the woodwork. Groups like Friends of Lulu have formed to unite women who read and work in comics. Many stores have "girl friendly" titles on display, but the employees are just as willing to show female customers traditional super hero books if that's what they're looking for. And it's not just the number of female fans that is growing. The women inside the pages are getting a better rap as well.

Today, female comic book characters aren't just the "women in refrigerators" of times past. Girls can admire Ms. Marvel's strength, Kate Bishop's bravery, She-Hulk's intelligence, and Spider-Girl's determination. Yes, many of these characters still have gravity-defying proportions that would cause them serious back problems in real life. But we're taking steps towards getting to a point where female super heroes get as much respect as their male counterparts.

We've still got a ways to go before the general public sees comics as a medium designed for everyone--men and women, adults and children alike. But with every new reader who picks up a comic book and likes what they see inside, we're getting closer.

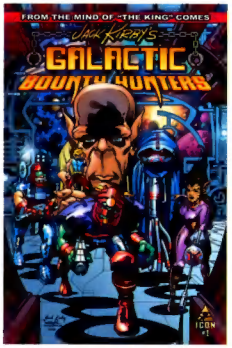
So, yes, little girl, Cap can be real, if you want him to be.

Molly

ITEM! It's awards time in the comics industry, and some of the folks toiling in the Hotspot office have received their share of attention! YOUNG AVENGERS and Allan Heinberg were nominated for Best New Series and Best Writer, respectively, by the Eisner Awards. And the Harvey Awards were even more generous, putting up Brian Michael Bendis and Ed Brubaker for Best Writer, David Finch for Best Penciler, Tim Townsend for Best Inker, Frank D'Armata for Best Colorist, Steve Epting for Best Cover Artist, YOUNG AVENGERS for Best New Series, CAPTAIN AMERICA for Best Continuing Series, and both CAPTAIN AMERICA #7 and HOUSE OF M #8 for Best Single Issue--and that only scratches the surface of the accolades Marvel received (but the other guys can write their own plug-pages!) Congrats to all those nominated--you know how we'll be voting!

ITEM! We're just back from Wizard World Philadelphia, where we hobnobbed with the likes of Steve McNiven, Andy Kuhn, Dan Slott, Will Conrad, Mike Deodato, Greg Pak, Mike Oeming and the entire Romita clan. The highlight of the weekend was our annual trek to Gino's for authentic Philly cheesesteaks--but the high point of the show itself had to be the inaugural edition of "Prize or No-Prize", a wacky Mark Gruenwald-style game show in which the fans had an opportunity to show off their knowledge of Marvel trivia and win prizes--if they had the guts to stay in the game! We'll likely be staging "Prize or No-Prize" again throughout the season--so look for us at a convention center near you!

ITEM! Speaking of Mark Gruenwald, we were delighted to see the write-up the New York Daily News gave to his widow, Catherine Schuller, the other day. Catherine's been garnering some acclaim as a makeover specialist for plus-sized women, a career she began after Mark's untimely passing almost ten years ago. Catherine was always one of the good ones, so it's nice to see her get her due--and we want to be sure that she knows she hasn't been forgotten around the halls of mighty Marvel!



ITEM! It's been forever since there's been a new Jack Kirby comic from the House of Ideas, but all that is about to change--sorta. This month sees the release of JACK KIRBY'S GALACTIC BOUNTY HUNTERS #1, an all-new creator-owned Icon series penned by Jack's daughter Lisa Kirby, utilizing concepts and character designs created by the King! Mike Thibodeaux and Karl Kesel provide the artwork, aided and abetted by Richard French and Mike Royer, and colorist Wil Quintana! So if you're a fan of that old-time Marvel magic, it's a debut not to be missed!

AUBREY'S
OUT-OF-CONTEXT FUNNIES
YEGGIR, BUCKY, M'LAD, THIS OUTFIT WAS THE RAGE IN THE GAY NINETIES.
ONE MUST HAVE BEEN THE OUTRAGE OF THOSE GAY DAYS!
This month's doozy comes from Captain America Comics #7, from 1941!

ON SALE JULY 2006

ANNIHILATION: NOVA #4: Nova versus Annihilus!

ANNIHILATION: RONAN #4: The price of Ronan's freedom may be his life...

ANNIHILATION: SILVER SURFER #4: The Surfer battles Ravenous and his armada!

ANNIHILATION: SUPER-SKRULL #4: The Super-Skrull strikes back against the Annihilation Wave!

BEYOND #1: Nine heroes from across the Marvel Universe are thrust together on Battleworld!

CAPTAIN AMERICA #20: Cap faces an enemy from World War II!

CIVIL WAR #3: The battle lines are drawn!

CIVIL WAR: FRONT LINE #3: Behind bars, Speedball must fight for his survival!

CIVIL WAR: FRONT LINE #4: An old enemy visits Ben Urich!

CIVIL WAR: YOUNG AVENGERS & RUNAWAYS #1: Will the Young Avengers hunt the Runaways, or save them?

FANTASTIC FOUR #539: A CIVIL WAR tie-in. The Thing makes a drastic choice!

FANTASTIC FOUR: FIRST FAMILY #5: A team divided! An enemy uncovered!

IRON MAN #10: The Sentry's mission: capture Iron Man!

JACK KIRBY'S GALACTIC BOUNTY HUNTERS #1: From the mind of "The King" comes a new group of heroes!

LAST PLANET STANDING #5: Galactus prepares to sacrifice the entire universe!

MARVEL TEAM-UP #22: Tony Stark, the Iron Maniac?!

MS. MARVEL #5: Guest starring Dr. Strange! A world dies!

NEW AVENGERS #22: A CIVIL WAR tie-in. Luke Cage chooses a side, but what will happen to his new family?

SHE-HULK #10: Shulkie takes on her own husband, the Man-Wolf!

SPIDER-GIRL #100: FINAL ISSUE! Spider-Girl meets her untimely end...or does she?

THUNDERBOLTS #104: A CIVIL WAR tie-in. The T-Bolts are building a super-villain army!

X-FACTOR #9: A CIVIL WAR tie-in! Guest starring the Astonishing X-Men!

FIVE FUN FACTOIDS FROM ANDY SCHMIDT

Editor of MS. MARVEL, X-FACTOR and ANNIHILATION

1. Andy is my middle name.
2. I owe my love of comics to my two older brothers, Arne and Craig.
3. Growing up, Havok and Union Jack were my two favorite Marvel super heroes.
4. My vocal chords were damaged in surgery, which altered my voice forever.
5. I'm reading The Da Vinci Code right now, and yes, the movie is out, and no, I have no intention of seeing it. R.I.F. = Reading is fun!

E-MAIL: MHEROES@MARVEL.COM
MARK E-MAIL "OKAY TO PRINT"